



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
District of New Hampshire*

*Federal Building  
55 Pleasant Street, Room 312  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301*

*603/225-1552*

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:**

**Thomas P. Colantuono**

**United States Attorney**

**Joseph N. Laplante**

**Assistant U.S. Attorney**

**(603) 225-1562 x 230**

**SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE  
HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA ("HIDTA") TASK FORCE**

**MEMBERS OF SALEM, NH/LAWRENCE, MA "CRACK" COCAINE RING  
ENTER GUILTY PLEAS TO FEDERAL DISTRIBUTION CHARGES**

**CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE:** United States Attorney Tom Colantuono and DEA Resident Agent in Charge Leo Ducey announced that **Ramon SURIEL, 35, and Opinio PENA, 45**, of Lawrence, MA, were convicted today of crack cocaine distribution charges.

According to affidavits accompanying federal criminal complaints issued by U.S. Magistrate Judge James Muirhead during June and July, 2004, SURIEL and RENA were part a four-person drug distribution network that sold "crack" cocaine to an undercover DEA Special Agent during the spring and summer of 2004 in Salem, NH and Methuen, MA. Also facing federal charges arising from the investigation are:

- Lizette HERNANDEZ, 36, of Lawrence, MA; and
- Carmen Llaurador, aka Carmen Diaz, 36, of Lawrence, MA.

SURIEL and PENA entered guilty pleas in U.S. District Court to Informations charging them separately with possession with intent to distribute over 50 grams of cocaine base, aka "crack" cocaine. Both were detained bail pending sentencing hearings to be scheduled for early 2005. Because of the quantity of crack cocaine involved in the case, both face a minimum 10-year term of imprisonment, and a potential maximum life sentence.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated, "My Office is committed not only to aggressively prosecuting drug traffickers operating in Manchester and New Hampshire's other larger cities, but also those importing illegal drugs into New Hampshire over the Massachusetts border. The Southern New Hampshire HIDTA Task Force conducted a thorough and aggressive investigation in this case."

The conviction resulted from a Southern New Hampshire HIDTA Task Force, located at DEA's New Hampshire headquarters. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph N. Laplante, the Lead Attorney for the District of New Hampshire in the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("New England OCDEF").